619 The name also includes various peasant
[563] groups and individuals who migrated from the Nile valley and who were incorporated into the tribal organization by a system of tribal adoption called "Iktitab." Most of these peasant groups came to the desert
[701] to avoid military drafting by becoming part of Awlad Ali, who, until
[554] 1947, were exempted from serving in the Egyptian army. Although groups and individuals thus adopted become part of the pedigrees of the adopting tribal segments and are supposed to enjoy equal status, yet, insofar as their origin is still remembered, they are looked down upon by the Sa'adi and occupy a position somewhere between that of Awlad Ali Sa'adi and that of the Murabiteen.

619 The Sa'adi tribes consider themselves to be the descendants of a
173 certain Aqqar Ben Sa'ada or Aqqar El-Sherif, a descendant of Bani Suleim,
who settled in Cyrenaica in the Fifth Century. Although they claim to
[144] be of pure Arab ancestory, all sources agree that a considerable amount of mixture between Arab and indigenous Berber populations took place during the period they have been in North Africa.

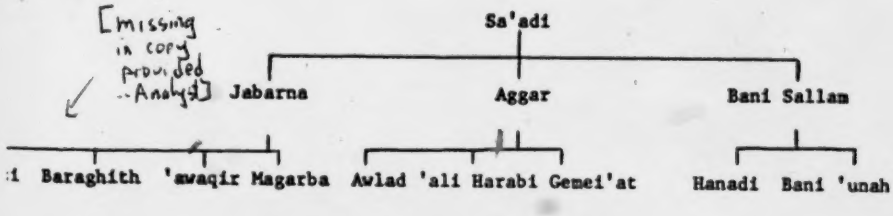

Fig. 1. The Sa'adi Tribes

* The exact relationship of the Gemeiat tribe to the Sa'adi tribes is not exactly known. Many informants, as well as accounts of earlier travelers in the area, assert that descent from Hkadiga, a sister of Ali and Harb, and therefore are cousins of Awlad Ali. Others, especially members of Sa'adi tribes, themselves, deny any genealogical

619 175 648 from forced labor in government projects and released from the payment of taxes. The government agreed to these demands, and on their part, Awlad Ali helped Muhammad Ali extensively in his military expedition in Syria and Arabia and were a major factor in the battle of 1815 at Bissel where he succeeded in breaking Wahabi power. They also helped his son, Ismeal, in his expedition to the Sudan.

• [701] Later, when the Egyptian army was organized, the government exempted Awlad Ali and other tribal groups which helped in the military conquests from military service, but required them to undertake the guarding of the desert roads and the frontiers of Egypt. Also, in [423] exchange for their previous services, they were given the right to use the land of the Western Desert and left the question of its distribution among the various tribal segments to the native tribal leaders.

619 175 648 642 Finally, in 1832, Awlad Ali were granted a form of legal and political autonomy whereby the government acknowledged the tribal legal and judicial system as the means to settle disputes between members of the tribe. The government also recognized the authority of the native tribal leaders and allowed the tribal populations to be governed by their own native system of leadership.

This political autonomy of Awlad Ali existed until 1947. Although their usefulness to the government had long ceased to exist, they had continued to enjoy the privileges they had obtained earlier. This was partly due to the fact that the various governments that came after Muhammad Ali showed no interest in the area occupied by Awlad Ali. There were no taxable lands in the area, no natural resources of any promise, and the tribal population did not present any particular problem to attract the attention of the government. There was some smuggling

full-time employment with the government projects in the area and settle in fairly permanent houses near the place of work.

With the movement toward settling down, the relative legal and political autonomy which Awlad Ali once enjoyed is breaking down. This was reflected first in the loss of military exemption. In 1947, the draft law was applied to all tribal populations in Egypt, including Awlad Ali. The application is not seriously enforced, however, due to the fact that births are still not recorded in the area. In 1954, the "omda" or mayorship system practiced in the rural areas of Egypt was extended to the Western Desert with certain modifications to fit the tribal organization of populations in the area. This put a strain on the native system of leadership, a point which will be covered in later chapters. Finally, and along with the extension of the omda system, the jurisdiction of the legal system of the state was extended over the area. This resulted in a duality in the judicial process. The tribal law, with its traditional tribal mediators, is still functioning side by side with the modern court system of the state law. In many cases, especially in criminal cases, the individual is tried under both systems, and sometimes receives two different judgments for the same offense. Various efforts are being made to minimize the effects of this duality. In civil cases, the problem does not seem serious, since it is the parties themselves, or one of them, who voluntarily bring the case to the attention of the legal authorities. Therefore, they can choose between the traditional legal system and the modern courts of law. So far, civil cases are brought to the modern court system only when the native procedures fail to achieve a settlement. As such, the

634 who reach the age of military service. He is also supposed to report
554 the presence of any fugitive or criminal in his district and report
657 crimes occurring in that district and which involve members of the tribal segment he represents.

634 The first two duties of the omda to the government do not involve
554 any conflict of interest. Unlike the rural areas where sons are con-
657 sidered a very important economic asset to their parents, and therefore,
562 there is a general resentment of military service which takes the sons
701 away and deprives the parents of their important work around the fields,
178 Awlad Ali look at military service as

1 On the basis of one percent of the yearly yield.

an opportunity to have their sons go to the city, obtain guaranteed payment, and escape the hardship of nomadic existence. Economic activities
[233] in the area do not require the cooperation of a large number of individuals, and most of the grazing of animals is done either by a paid shep-
herd or by one of the grown-up sons. Although there still exists an
[183] ideology which values having many sons, yet with the cessation of hostilities between the tribal segments, their presence in the area has lost its
[464] value. Many of the younger generation are seeking jobs with the government projects in the area or in the city. Neither one is easy to find. Joining the army is increasingly considered as an easy alternative.

634 The omda's function which seems to involve some conflicting loyalties
554 is that of reporting crimes involving members of his tribal segment. But
657 even this does not pose a serious problem as it might seem. Almost all
674 minor crimes committed against property or persons as well as all civil disputes are left to be handled by the tribal proceedings. The duties of the omda are limited to reporting the cases of murder and serious assault

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Arabs, to assess and collect taxes, to maintain security, and to control the few police allotted to them. In this task they expected co-operation from the local Shaikhs of the tribal sections and the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya lodges.

It is remarkable that the Bedouin paid any taxes at all, for the mudirs had not sufficient force at their command, nor had the Governor at Banghazi, to compel the Bedouin to pay if they were determined not to do so. The mudir of Slanta had only 50 to 60 soldiers in his sub-district and the Bara'asa whom he administered could have annihilated this force with ease, as could the 'Awaqir the 50 soldiers and the handful of police stationed at Suluq. That taxes were collected at all, and all the more that they were collected without constant disturbance, is to be accounted for partly by the recognition by the Shaikhs of the tribal sections, with whom the mudirs were careful to keep on good personal terms, that there was a moral obligation to pay them; but there were also sanctions if they were not paid. If the Shaikh of a tribal section did not collect the taxes due from that section, he was held responsible and action could be taken against him personally. The mudir, accompanied by a small armed force, went a round of the tribal sections attached to his sub-district each year, generally in springtime, and sent out other tax-collecting parties in other directions. Sometimes special tax commissions appointed by the Governor also toured the country. A favourite device was for such parties to quarter themselves in the camp of a recalcitrant Shaikh and to reside there as his guests, for the soldiers and police carried few provisions, till the tax was paid. The Shaikhs, on the other hand, were made partners in the undertaking by, besides investment with an official robe and status, receiving a percentage of the taxes collected, the mudir himself also taking a percentage. Moreover, each Shaikh whose section paid the tax was determined that the other sections should not escape paying as well. A Shaikh was able to divide up the assessment on his section among the minor Shaikhs, and the minor Shaikhs among yet smaller ones. It was in the interest of each Shaikh to see that the smaller ones did not escape their share and leave him with the responsibility for a deficit. Responsibility was in this way passed down the tribal structure. On the whole the system worked well and the Turkish officials and the Bedouin did not

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the Sayyid's wishes in this matter, both to uphold the Sayyid's prestige among his own people and to make him keep to his promises, particularly about the Allied prisoners and the Turkish officers, under threat of closing the port should he recant. There were in Cyrenaica still many Turkish officers urging the Bedouin to continue the struggle and Sayyid Idris had promised to round them up should al-Sallum be opened to trade. The question of the Turks was bound up with the al-Sallum issue because, as the Sayyid pointed out, Turkey had kept his people supplied by submarine, and while the Allies continued their blockade he could not afford to break with her.

Another problem was the immediate dispersal of the Sanusi fighting bands, or 'dors' (*adwar*), on which the Italian delegates insisted. It would have been foolish for the Sayyid to have disbanded his forces while discussions were proceeding, since it was their presence in the field which compelled the Allies to negotiate. He urged that it would be useless for him to agree to the dispersal of the bands, because they had no intention of dispersing and he had no means of forcing them to do so. The only result would be the loss of his prestige among his followers, who would say that he had become 'Italianized'. These bands continued to be a bone of contention between the Sanusi and the Italians for the next six years, and the issue was only settled by the military subjugation of the whole of Cyrenaica in 1932.

It was a question of importance to the Italians, because the answer to it was also the answer to what they regarded as the fundamental question of sovereignty. On this point the Sayyid was unyielding. He argued that his family, like the Arab princes of Arabia, had never accepted such demands as the Italians made, even from the Turks, fellow Muslims ruled by the Caliph of Islam; and he insisted that the British, who had everywhere shown themselves to be friends to the Arabs, should not press those of Cyrenaica to accept Italian sovereignty, which was the issue of the war and could only be imposed on a defeated people. The British regarded the question of sovereignty as a theoretical one and could not understand why the Italians attached so much importance to it.

Col. Talbot thought they should be content with the occupation of the ports and other centres, as the British were in Egypt,

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Italy would therefore withdraw from her colonial adventure, advised the Amir to sign the Accord of al-Rajma in the hope that he would not have to carry out its terms. He was later to spend over 16 years in exile in Italy for his alleged duplicity. The Italians did not at this time charge the Amir with more than weakness when, after the stipulated eight months had passed, he had failed to carry out the terms of the accord, especially in the matter of the armed Sanusi camps.

These camps were supply points garrisoned by the remnants of the Sanusi army of 1917. Through them and from them the Sanusiya was exercising political control over the country and administering the tribes. The chief camps in 1917 were Ajadabiya, al-Shlaidima, Marawa, Khawalan, al-Abyar, Taknis, and 'Akrama. Each was under a *qaimaqam* and had its commandant of troops, its qadi for judicial proceedings, and its tithe collectors who collected from the Bedouin a tax on crops and flocks. With the development of the political functions of the Order alms had been transformed into taxes. Ajadabiya and al-Shlaidima had as their *nazir*, inspector, 'Ali Pasha al-'Abdiya. Al-Abyar and Taknis came under Sidi 'Umar al-Mukhtar, and Marawa, Khawalan, and 'Akrama came under Sayyid Safi al-Din.

When asked why these camps had not been broken up the Amir said that the accord had been very badly received by the Bedouin and that were it to be enforced hastily serious disturbances might ensue. He counselled caution. In addition to the continuance of the armed camps in defiance of the accord, the Italians also complained of concerted passive resistance, on the part of the Shaikhs of Sanusiya lodges and the Shaikhs of tribes, to collaboration with their officials; but either because they were not yet ready to use force or because they were convinced that the Amir was unable to dictate to his followers, and probably for both reasons, they continued to temporize.

By the further Accord of Bu Mariyam of 11 November 1921 the dissolution of the armed camps was confirmed, but it was agreed that until the Italians had strengthened their administrative control and political influence in the country the still-existing Sanusi camps should be held jointly. There were to be four so-called '*Campi Misti*', at al-Abyar, Taknis, Slanta, and 'Akrama, manned by Italian and Sanusi troops in the

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proportion of 5 to 4, each controlled by its own representative. To these four was later added a fifth camp, al-Makhili, so that the Italians might establish themselves at an important watering-place of the southern nomads.

The new arrangement was fantastic. Two forces, each under its own officers and flag, each opposed to the other in every particular, were jointly responsible for the security and welfare of the country. What made it even more absurd in the eyes of later Fascist critics was the fact that the Sanusi soldiers in these camps received their rations and pay from the Italian Government they did everything to flout. It was, moreover, an admission on the part of the Italians that they were unable to enforce the accords they signed with the Amir if the Bedouin did not intend to carry out their terms, and that they could not establish themselves in the country unless the Sanusiya was ready to allow them to do so. All that apologists for this new accord have been able to say in defence of it was that the Italian Government had by this time realized that nothing was in any case likely to come of all these agreements and in the end only signed it in order that, while formally respecting it, they might have time and opportunity to establish their authority among the tribes, particularly among the 'Awaqir, the western Darsa, the Bara'asa, and the 'Abaidat. The Rome Government, not wanting to increase its troubles by starting a new war in Cyrenaica, imposed a policy of appeasement on its restless Colonial Government. It was bad enough to have to face the anarchy in Tripolitania, and there was always a danger that if the situation in Cyrenaica deteriorated Sayyid Ahmad might return to raise again the standard of revolt. Sayyid Idris might be weak and at times difficult, but he was at least pacific. The harassed Governor was therefore instructed that he would have to continue the battle of words till it became feasible to open real hostilities. However, the Italian Government were mistaken in believing that the new accord would allow them to increase their influence in the country, for the Sanusiya, through its representatives in the 'Mixed Camps', came between the tribes and the Italians. It is generally admitted by Italian commentators that after Bu Mariyam the Government was only apparently in the ascendancy politically, while in fact the administration of the whole country outside the towns continued

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Accord of al-Rajma. But the Italians were not yet ready to break with him finally, not wishing to compromise the operations they were carrying out in Tripolitania. They therefore started new discussions, conducted in person by Amendola, the Minister for the Colonies, who, on his return to Italy, expressed satisfaction with the talks and confidence in the Amir, neither of which he could have felt. In Mondaini's opinion the Government's policy of continuing to treat with the Sanusiya at so late a stage was consistent and, in the circumstances, wise, for it was believed that the greed for lucre and honours so unashamedly displayed by members of the Amir's family would bring them into disrepute among the Arabs, while the Government would be able to organize under its administration the zone of the plateau nearest its coastal bases and thus prepare for its penetration into the interior. In defence of Amendola's policy, later subjected to much criticism,[1] Mondaini further observes that the Fascist Government itself delayed action till the spring of 1923 when the Tripolitanian rebellion had been crushed.[2]

Concessions certainly did not lessen tension. The Italians felt that the Sanusiya was using the 'Mixed Camps' as a medium for anti-Italian propaganda, as indeed they were, not only through their official representatives in the camps but also through persons not officially recognized, such as the Sanusiya Shaikhs 'Umar al-Mukhtar, Salih al-'Awwami, and Khalid al-Humri; and they suspected that Shaikh 'Abd al-Aziz al-'Isawi had been sent by the Amir into the Misurata region to act as his liaison with the insurgents there. The Amir had selected for his personal advisers the most recalcitrant of the zawiya Shaikhs. They further accused the Order of responsibility for certain incidents which happened in the late summer of 1922: an attack on an Italian postal car near al-Zawiya al-Baida and the firing of some Italian property at al-Zuwaitina. Rome, said to have been misled by 'Umar Pasha al-Kakhiya, blamed the local government for these incidents and appointed a new Governor who made a further, and as it turned out final, gesture of conciliation by paying to the Amir the remainder of the money owing to him under the Accord of al-Rajma. But nothing could brake the wheels now. Already in August the Committee elected

[1] Giglio, op. cit., p. 99.

[2] Mondaini, op. cit., p. 475.

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followed it. In 1923, when he was called to take the foremost part in the struggle, he was already over sixty years of age. He was a simple man, religious, courageous, contemptuous of worldly honours and success, and with singular tenacity and powers of physical endurance. It may well be true that, as is reported, Sayyid al-Mahdi said 'If we had ten men like 'Umar we would not need any more'.

IV

All the *adwar*, or guerrilla bands, on the plateau came under Sidi 'Umar's command and he signed himself *al-Naib al-'Amm*, the Representative-General (of the Sanusiya). Each Bedouin tribe, as in Enver's day, maintained its own guerrilla band, some 100 to 300 men strong. Towards the end of the war the guerrillas never numbered, all told, more than 600 to 700. Only a certain number of men could maintain themselves on the country and move through it with speed and secrecy. As in other guerrilla wars, the actual fighting was done by small bands of enthusiasts, whose success nevertheless depended on the goodwill of the whole population. The bands suffered very heavy casualties, but were maintained at strength by a constant stream of adventurous spirits from submitted and unsubmitted sections alike. Though each band was named after a tribe and its members were chiefly recruited from that tribe and fought in its territory, they were not entirely recruited from it and they might fight anywhere. In each tribal band there were a good number of volunteers from other tribes and a sprinkling of *Ikhwan*, Sudanese, and Tripolitanians. The 'Awaqir and Magharba had separate bands while the other tribal bands usually fought in pairs, Hasa–'Abaidat, Bara'asa–Darsa, and 'Abid–'Arafa. A Misuratan contingent formed a small band of its own which greatly distinguished itself in the fighting. Each band had a simple organization: a commander, a *qaimaqam* for civil affairs, a qadi for religious and legal purposes, a commissariat agent, and a number of officers, some of whom had been trained in Turkish regular units. Sidi 'Umar maintained discipline in the bands, and acts of pillage or personal vendetta were severely punished. Those of the guerrillas who possessed horses rode them. The rest went on foot. Each band had its Sanusi flag.

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When things were quiet members of a band would have their families and herds with them and live in their own tents, but when pressed they left their women and children and beasts in the tents of the submitted population and the only non-combatants in their camps would then be a few female cooks. Before the end of the war many of the Patriots, including Sidi 'Umar, had sent their families to Egypt so that they could act more freely.

There was also a general administration for all the bands and this came directly under Sidi 'Umar. They maintained inter-communication and worked to a common strategy. Guerrilla headquarters had also to arrange for the collection of a tithe from the entire population to help pay for the expenses of the campaign. Throughout the war Sidi 'Umar's tax-collectors were taking tithes from the submitted population, not always without trouble, and were giving written receipts for the payments. The tithe paid by each tribe went to support its own band. Sidi 'Umar had also to arrange for caravans to bring supplies from Egypt, and to supervise their distribution to the armed forces and the payment of customs dues on what went to the civilian population. Sidi 'Umar also kept up correspondence with Sayyid Idris and Sanusi elements and sympathizers in Egypt.

The guerrilla bands were in constant contact with the enemy. One of the most striking features of the campaign was the frequency of the fighting. At some point or other on the plateau a skirmish or larger engagement took place every few days for nearly nine years during the spring and summer months. In the account of the campaign which follows I mention but few of these fights, those which had exceptional importance for the campaign as a whole or as examples of the scale of the fighting. The few mentioned are therefore no indication of the amount of fighting. Its frequency may be judged by Gen. Graziani's statement that in the final year of the war, when resistance, compared with earlier years, was feeble and sporadic, there took place 53 engagements (*combattimenti*) and 210 skirmishes (*conflitti*).[1]

This incessant fighting cannot, as I have already said, be described in the language of text-book logistics in terms of manœuvring, objectives, and battles. Indeed, the Italians had

[1] *Rivista delle Colonie Italiane*, vol. vi (I), 1932, pp. 52–3.

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to adapt themselves to the kind of fighting which seldom fails to upset the orthodox military mind. Text-book strategy does not apply to an enemy who wanders at will over a country with which he is familiar from birth, among a friendly people ready to provide him with exact intelligence, and in small mobile bands; and whose strategy is little more than the guerrilla imperatives—strike suddenly, strike incessantly, strike hard, get out quick. An army can only be manœuvred to inflict defeats on the enemy and to destroy his armed forces when he has an opposing army which can be brought to decisive engagements. The Italians were fighting a people, not an army, and a people can only be defeated by total imprisonment or extermination.

If the Bedouin had had anything which could clearly have been isolated as 'armed forces', these could easily have been destroyed by Italian superiority in men and machines. But they had nothing which could, properly speaking, be called an army, and they had no lines which could be pierced or turned and no strongholds which could be taken or in which troops could be contained. Against Bedouin it was of little profit to occupy towns and villages, for they retired to less accessible regions or circulated gaily between the Italian garrisons. Control of the roads and ports was also of little benefit. Roads were meaningless to the Bedouin and they were independent of overseas trade since they could live on the country for immediate necessities and obtain from Egypt what few additional supplies they required to carry on the war. To ease the supply problem, as well as to be of maximum nuisance to the Italian garrisons and convoys, the guerrilla bands were kept as small and mobile as possible. Their smallness and mobility confused the slow and unwieldy Italian columns. If the columns split up they were liable to be surrounded by concerted action of the bands and annihilated, whereas if they kept together, the cost of formation was the loss of speed and surprise. There seemed to be no enemy forces to fight, yet attack was incessant. There were no fixed points of opposition. It was indefinite and disseminated.

Even when contact could be established with the guerrilla bands and they could be defeated, as they often were, their defeat could not be turned into more than a temporary rout, for there was no highly organized tactical system to be upset,

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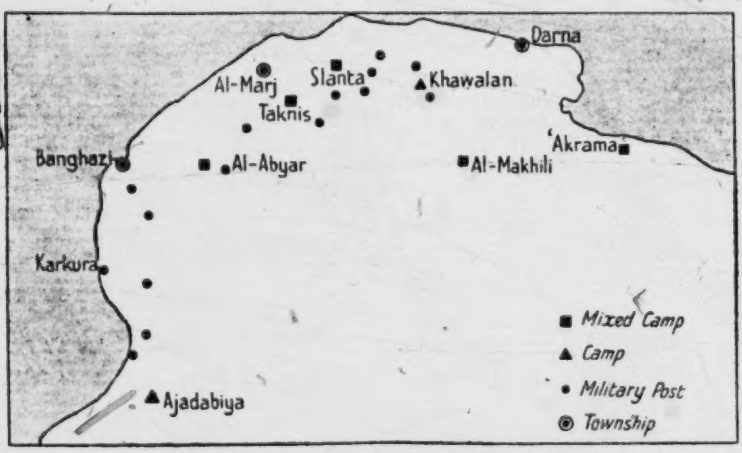
lished on their own account, and the Italians considered illegally, a camp at Khawalan of about 100 men and a number of small posts, shown on the map, with about 15 to 30 men in each. Their headquarters force was at Ajadabiya.

As stated at the end of the last chapter, Gen. Bongiovanni seized the 'Mixed Camps' on 6 March 1923. Though this day may be regarded as the date of the recommencement of hostilities



Distribution of Sanusi forces in March 1923.

in Cyrenaica, the first operational phase proper was a drive to the south of Banghazi. The country there offered fewer difficulties to mechanized movement in the grand style than the plateau country, and it was near the main Italian base. The objective was the little village of Ajadabiya, the Sanusi seat of government and military headquarters, called grandiloquently by Bongiovanni after its capture the '*Roccaforte della Senussia*'.[1] The Italians seem to have believed that they had only to take it for resistance to collapse everywhere, much as it had collapsed in Old Tripolitania after the chief centres had been occupied. The Sanusi forces, under their Commander, Qajja bin 'Abdalla, a Qur'ani of Tibesti, were unable to defend the village against so large and well-equipped a column, and after they had been worsted in several fights they retired, leaving the jubilant

[1] *Proclama alle popolazioni*, 1923, p. 5.

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Italians to occupy it on 21 April, the Birthday of Rome. This proved to be less favourable an augury than was hoped, for early in June two of their columns advancing from Ajadabiya on Marsa al-Braiqa were almost annihilated by Magharba tribesmen.

Their experience in the *barqa* taught the Italians afresh the lesson of 1911 to 1915, that against Bedouin unwieldy columns advancing without concealment in a direct line on definite and fixed objectives could lead to little more than skirmishes, for the enemy was too wise to become involved in decisive action and mobile enough to avoid it; so they adopted the new tactics of making surprise raids by mechanized units on the Bedouin encampments, slaughtering man and beast indiscriminately, and destroying the grain stores. In these raids, on what in a non-colonial war would be regarded as the civilian population, the purpose was to kill as many of the Bedouin as possible, striking terror into the hearts of the shepherd folk of Cyrenaica. When the rains came and mechanized transport could no longer be used, the camps were bombed and machine-gunned from the air. The Bedouin suffered greatly from this persistent strafing, the Italian estimate of their losses—I must repeat that Italian figures are highly suspect—from 6 March to 3 September 1923 being 800 killed, 230 captured, and 1,000 wounded, besides about 700 camels and 22,000 sheep killed or confiscated. These losses were incurred only in the western part of Cyrenaica, for during the opening phase the rest of the country was quiet, except for minor skirmishes between Sidi 'Umar and the Italians in the Marmarica. At the end of the year the Sanusi forces had retired to country where they were less vulnerable, roughly to south and east of the line al-Braiqa–al-Qatafiya–Msus, with infiltrations everywhere along it towards the Italian posts.

The ease with which they had entered Ajadabiya and had raided and overcome resistance in the *barqa* generally had misled the Italians into believing that they would encounter little resistance elsewhere. They were further misled by the number of submissions they received at the commencement of the campaign: by the end of May 1923, 10,380 in the Ajadabiya zone, 3,417 in the Banghazi zone, and 7,000 in the zone of al-Marj; a total of 20,797 with 6,028 tents and more than 10,000

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head of livestock, on which fines were levied for having taken part in the resistance. These submissions were from the less warlike Bedouin, those within easy reach of administrative centres, who had been taken by surprise and overwhelmed by the size of the Italian forces and their mechanized equipment, especially their planes, against the indiscriminate bombing and machine-gunning of which they had neither protection nor reply. They lacked the forest covering of the plateau tribes and the desert wastes into which the tribes of the Sirtica could retire. Moreover, the Italians had not yet realized that submission to protect families and herds did not exclude help in men, supplies, and intelligence to the fighting bands which continued resistance in country better suited to guerrilla warfare. The quietness of the plateau also deceived them. The Bedouin, unlike themselves, did not have an army ready to hand which could be sent into action at a moment's notice. It took the plateau tribes time to grasp what was happening and to form guerrilla groups. It also took the leaders of the Bedouin, both tribal Shaikhs and zawiya Shaikhs, time to accommodate themselves to Sayyid Idris's defection and vacillation, which seriously affected morale in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and caused much coming and going between Cairo and the battlefields.

As the war entered its second phase in 1924–5 it soon became evident that neither the ponderous spectacular movements nor the mechanized raids on the camps which had been used in the flat *barqa* country were suited to the rugged and wooded plateau. The campaign rapidly assumed the character of guerrilla warfare, some of the features of which I have already outlined, with its tedious record of countless skirmishes and surprises. When the operational season opened in March 1924 the advanced Italian dispositions were on the west–east line al-Shlaidima–al-Abyar–Sidi Salim–Taknis–Marawa–Slanta–al-Fayidiya–Khawalan–al-Makhili. The Sanusi 'regular army', mixed with tribal volunteers from the Magharba and southern 'Awaqir, was still unbeaten under al-Qazza in the eastern Sirtica between Ajadabiya and the Wadi al-Farigh. The tribal guerrilla bands under Sidi 'Umar were mostly on the southern slopes of the central plateau. They were chiefly recruited from the Bara'asa, 'Abid, and 'Awaqir tribes which had from the earliest days of the Italian occupation of Cyrenaica shown themselves most hostile to

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penetration, though they were assisted by contingents from the Darsa, Hasa, and 'Abaidat.

In the fighting between March and June of 1924 the Italians reckoned that about 600 men of the 'Abid, Bara'asa, and northern 'Awaqir had been killed and 25,000 head of their livestock had been captured. In the summer and autumn at least another 250 were killed and about 1,500 camels and 17,000 sheep and goats captured. In spite of these, what were to them very heavy, casualties, the Bedouin continued to harass Italian posts and communications. Salih Lataiwish with his Magharba tribesmen menaced Ajadabiya; Abu al-Qasim al-Zintani with an 'Awaqir band threatened the advanced Italian bases at al-Abyar, al-Rajma, and Banina; Sidi 'Umar with the 'Abid tribal band contained the posts in the al-Marj sector, and detachments under his lieutenant 'Ali bu Rahayyim operated against communications between al-Marj and Talmaitha; Husain Juwaifi's Bara'asa band worried the garrisons at al-Zawiya al-Baida, al-Fayidiya, and Slanta; and Qtait bu Musa with his Hasa and 'Abaidat volunteers was camped opposite Khawalan. Behind these detachments were the camps of the Bedouin who had not submitted, even in appearance, in the *sirwal*, the *barqa al-baida*, and along the southern slopes of the plateau everywhere. The Italians found it necessary to pause to consolidate gains of territory and to carry out a reorganization of their operational units.

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Sidi 'Umar's strategy at the time, both as Commander of the 'Abid band and as Commander-in-Chief of all the guerrilla forces on the plateau, was to hold its southern slopes. Their rugged desolation prevented the use of mechanized forces against him and gave him tactical superiority over foot and horse patrols. From the slopes he was able both to menace the Italian posts and communications on the plateau and to cover the families of his fighting men in their camps to the south of it. The Italian answer to these tactics was obvious. They could not prevent guerrilla bands from circulating on the plateau in the cover of forest and deep ravines, but they had by this time established themselves in sufficient strength on the margin of the plateau, and had gained sufficient experience in the handling of mechanized patrols to attack the camps of non-combatants in the flat steppe country to the south. These camps were easily

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spotted by planes and either bombed or machine-gunned from the air or destroyed by armoured cars.

As a result of the operations in 1924 and the spring of 1925 the Bedouin bands were pressed eastwards away from the main Italian bases at Banghazi and al-Marj. However, Italian control of much of the country from which they claimed to have driven the Patriots was less secure than the disposition of their advance posts suggests, for the guerrilla bands continued to operate in it. Nevertheless they were now able to mass men in these posts in such numbers, and to equip and supply them so well, that a Patriot attack on them had small chance of success. Sidi 'Umar had therefore to fall back on such operations as could be conducted by his small guerrilla [illegible], now deprived of any secure bases, mostly in and from the thick forest country to the south of the watershed between Marawa and al-Qaiqab and in the broken country of the Wadi al-Kuf area, where they had protection from air-reconnaissance and mechanized patrols and the advantage of superior intelligence and knowledge of the terrain.

The Italians had to adapt their tactics anew to the kind of warfare most favourable to the enemy. Gen. Mombelli's new operational plan was to establish a line of forts to act as *perni di manovra* from which the whole country could be ceaselessly patrolled to prevent the Patriot bands from massing against any point, to destroy their herds and crops, and to keep them constantly on the run. The main concentrations for these operations were al-Abyar, al-Marj, and Shahhat. The plan at first appeared to give the desired results but as time went on it gave less satisfaction. It was found that while it allowed the troops greater freedom of movement it was they, and not the Patriots, whose strength was worn out and finally exhausted. The Bedouin countered the new measures by attacking the smaller Italian patrols and dispersing before the larger. They solved the supply problem by living on the country, exacting food from the submitted sections, in whose country they also quartered their families, sowed their crops, and pastured their herds, so that the Italian patrols did not know what belonged to the *sottomessi* and what to the *ribelli* and they could only destroy the crops and beasts of the Patriots if they destroyed at the same time the crops and beasts of the quiescent part of

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Shaikhs met at Alexandria and informed the British Ambassador in Cairo that they recognized Sayyid Idris as their Amir and that he could speak on their behalf. At a second meeting of these Shaikhs in Cairo on 9 August 1940, after Italy had declared war, it was decided to form a Libyan force to co-operate with the British army in the Western Desert. Though some of the Tripolitanian notables refused to associate themselves with this offer, wishing to make a separate offer on their own account, it was gladly accepted by the British authorities, and the British-Arab Force, later known as the Libyan Arab Force, was recruited from among the Sanusi exiles in Egypt and later also from Sanusi prisoners of war, who had taken the first opportunity of surrendering to the British. It was officered by British and Arabs, including some of the veterans of the Italo-Sanusi wars, and at its maximum strength consisted of five battalions and a depot. The force was not trained and equipped for the kind of fighting which took place in the Western Desert, but it performed useful ancillary duties to which Mr. Eden paid a tribute in the House of Commons on 8 January 1942, when he declared that His Majesty's Government was determined that the Sanusi should not come again under Italian domination. It took part in the first and subsequent occupations of Cyrenaica by British troops, and two battalions served in the defence of Tubruq in 1941. The little Sanusi army fought under its own flag and Arab commissions in it were in the name of the Amir. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica also rendered services to the British army as guides and agents and in assisting escaped prisoners of war and men detached from their units during our two withdrawals to Egypt. They gave further assistance by their eager co-operation with the three British Military Administrations of their country, although those who were known to have rendered the British special assistance were shot by the Italians on our withdrawals.

When in 1943 Sayyid Idris visited Cyrenaica for the first time since his hurried departure from it in 1922 and was received with wild enthusiasm by the whole country, it was just a century after his grandfather had founded his first zawiya in it. During that century the Sanusiya Order had seen many changes and had itself changed. Even in the Grand Sanusi's time it had some political functions. The best Italian historian of the Order, Carlo Giglio, could write that at the death of its founder the